

Harmful Bacteria Persists in Montauk's Fort Pond

By Carissa Katz | October 15, 2018 - 9:22am



Though Fort Pond is beautiful to behold, Concerned Citizens of Montauk continues to advise people (and pets) to avoid contact with its waters, as a cyanobacteria bloom persists in certain parts of the pond. *Jane Bimson*

Based on its latest rounds of water testing earlier this week, Concerned Citizens of Montauk is again urging people to avoid contact with the water in Fort Pond, where a blue-green algae bloom persists.

The organization is monitoring Fort Pond for harmful blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, blooms in partnership with the Gobbler Lab at Stony Brook Southampton. Separately C.C.O.M. is partnering with the Surfrider Foundation's Blue Water Task Force to test water bodies in Montauk, Amagansett, and East Hampton for the enterococcus bacteria. Elevated levels of this bacteria -- often due to heavy rains, warm water temperatures, or extreme high tides -- are also considered a risk to human health.

Especially high tides this week "resulted in high bacteria levels at some locations," C.C.O.M.'s Kate Rossi-Snook noted in an email on Thursday.

In Fort Pond, the organization samples for cyanobacteria at two locations -- one by a town boat ramp on the southern part of the pond and another off Industrial Road at the northern end. "The boat ramp site is elevated above the [New York State Department of Environmental Conservation] threshold, and the Industrial Road site is hovering just below," wrote Ms. Rossi-Snook. Testing will be conducted again on Wednesday and weekly until the bloom clears, she said.

The most recent round of enterococcus testing this week showed medium to high bacteria levels at 14 of the 25 sites tested.

Medium levels were found at three locations in Lake Montauk and high levels at one location. High entero levels were also detected east of the jetty at Ditch Plain Beach, at Pussy's Pond in Springs, at David's Lane and Dunemere Road sites on Hook Pond in East Hampton, and in Georgica Pond on the beach side and by the Route 27 kayak launch area.

Medium bacteria levels were detected in Montauk at Tuthill Pond, at Fresh Pond Creek in Amagansett, at the head of Three Mile Harbor in East Hampton, and at the Cove Hollow Road access to Georgica Pond.

The next sampling for enterococcus will take place the week of Oct. 22.